

THE LIFE OF HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

SHEIKH ZAYED WAS BORN IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI IN 1918 AT QASR AL-HOSN TO SHEIKH SULTAN BIN ZAYED, THE RULER OF ABU DHABI FROM 1922-1926. HE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF SHEIKH SULTAN'S FOUR SONS AND WAS NAMED AFTER HIS FAMOUS GRANDFATHER, KNOWN AS 'ZAYED THE GREAT', THE RULER OF THE EMIRATE FROM 1885-1909.

SHEIKH ZAYED HAD A STRONG PASSION FOR ANYTHING WITH WHICH A TRUEBORN ARAB IS IDENTIFIED SUCH AS FALCONRY, RIDING ARABIAN THOROUGHBRED CAMEL AND HORSES AND MASTERING ARCHERY.

IN 1946, SHEIKH ZAYED WAS APPOINTED AS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS BROTHER, SHEIKH SHAKHBUT BIN SULTAN AL- NAHYAN, IN THE EASTERN REGION . DURING HIS TWENTY YEARS AS HIS BROTHER'S REPRESENTATIVE, SHEIKH ZAYED GAINED AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION. SHEIKH ZAYED BECAME A POPULAR AND RESPECTED LEADER . HE FREQUENTLY TRAVELLED TO EVEN THE REMOTEST PARTS OF THE REGION IN ORDER TO CONSULT WITH PEOPLE REGARDING THEIR NEEDS.

THE DISCOVERY OF OIL IN THE LATE 1950S TRANSFORMED THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF THE ABU DHABI. IN 1962 THE EMIRATE BEGAN EXPORTING OIL. THE AL-NAHYAN FAMILY UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED SHEIKH ZAYED AS THE NEW RULER OF THE EMIRATE ON AUGUST 6, 1966.

SHEIKH ZAYED CARRIED OUT MAJOR REFORMS, SUCH AS MODERN EDUCATION , HEALTHCARE, PUBLIC HOUSING, AND GENERAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

SHEIKH ZAYED'S PRIORITIES INCLUDED BUILDING NEW ROADS, CONSTRUCTION OF A BRIDGE TO LINK ABU DHABI ISLAND TO THE MAINLAND AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS, HOUSES, MEDICAL SERVICES , A SEAPORT AND AN AIRPORT. THOUSANDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE MOVED FROM BARASTI PALM FROND HOUSES INTO MODERN HOMES. MODERN ROADS WERE BUILT OVER THE DESERT SAND AND FRESH WATER SUPPLY AND ELECTRICITY WERE CONNECTED TO EVERY HOUSE. EDUCATION SHIFTED FROM THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM OF 'MUTAWIAH' TO A MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. THE DESERT BEDOUINS BEGAN TO RECEIVE MEDICAL SERVICES FROM CLINICS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THE UAE WAS FOUNDED ON DECEMBER 2, 1971, AND SHEIKH ZAYED WAS UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED BY THE RULERS OF THE EMIRATES AS THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE NEW STATE FOR FIVE YEARS. SHEIKH ZAYED WAS THE PRESIDENT, THE BUILDER AND THE CARING FATHER OF THE NATION. SHEIKH RASHID BIN SAEED AL MAKTOUM WAS ELECTED VICE -PRESIDENT.

SHEIKH ZAYED ORDERED THE PLANTING OF MORE THAN 140 MILLION TREES THROUGHOUT THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI. FURTHERMORE, HE FOUNDED A PROGRAM TO PROTECT NATIVE WILDLIFE ,SUCH AS THE DORCAS GAZELLE AND THE ARABIAN ORYX. IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS STRONG SUPPORT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SHEIKH ZAYED WAS THE FIRST HEAD OF STATE TO BE HONOURED, IN 1995, WITH THE GOLDEN PANDA AWARD BY THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND . IN 2005, ONE YEAR AFTER HIS PASSING, THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM UNEP HONOURED SHEIKH ZAYED POSTHUMOUSLY AS AN OUTSTANDING AND INNOVATIVE LEADER WITH THE 'CHAMPION OF THE EARTH' AWARD.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S INFRASTRUCTURE WAS ANOTHER PRESSING ISSUE FOR SHEIKH ZAYED.

THE 19TH OF RAMADAN 1425 A.H., CORRESPONDENT TO NOVEMBER 2ND, 2004 A.D. IS SADLY AN UNFORGETTABLE DATE AS THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES LOST ITS LEADER, THE FOUNDER OF ITS FEDERATION.

ARAB AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES MOURNED THE DEATH OF SHEIK ZAYED, AND PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD EXPRESSED THEIR SADNESS FOR HIS LOSS.

THE UAE PEOPLE FOUND SOLACE IN ZAYED'S SONS WHO GREW UP BY HIS SIDE, ABSORBING HIS KNOWLEDGE AS HE IS THE GREATEST TUTOR IN LEADERSHIP AND FAIR GOVERNANCE. SHEIKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED WAS THE WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO THE BEST PREDECESSOR AS HE ASSUMED POWER WITH THE CONSENT AND BLESSINGS OF ALL UAE SHEIKHS AND PEOPLE.

THE GREAT SHEIKH ZAYED GRAND MOSQUE IN ABU DHABI WAS LAUNCHED BY SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

THE GRAND MOSQUE WAS CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN 1996 AND 2007

SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN, WHO WANTED TO ESTABLISH A STRUCTURE THAT WOULD UNITE THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD WITH THE HISTORICAL AND MODERN VALUES OF ARCHITECTURE AND ART. HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE IS LOCATED ON THE GROUNDS ADJACENT TO THE GRAND MOSQUE.

